

The Lord's Day

Prophecy for a New Era

COMPILATION OF TEACHINGS FROM THE WORKS OF:

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Why do you need to know the content of the Book of Revelation?

At least by inference our Lord has stated the importance and necessity of Christians understanding this book – if they wish to escape being *not* blessed through allowing this information to be subtracted from their working knowledge (**Rev. 1:3, 22:19**). We of the contemporary generation are concluding the age of the past 2,000 years. Even non-Christians sense the soon grinding to a standstill of all man has built up apart from God, and ominous war clouds boiling up on the horizon. Therefore, today of all days, it is becoming a matter of physical life or death to learn to live by the wholeness of the Word of God (**Matt. 4:4**). Our Lord Jesus Christ is soon returning to clean out His Temple in the nations.

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For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act.”

Isaiah 28:21

I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me. I am the LORD, and there is none else.”

Isaiah 45:5-6

Introduction

All prophecy in the Old and the New Testament culminates in the events and time period described by the *Book of Revelation*. *Revelation* is written to and for potential overcomers who continue to follow God wholly. It is a Book that promises great blessing, power, wisdom, protection and preservation to those who do overcome. It contains a positive message of assurance and confidence for all God's people, and the negative and destructive aspects are not to dominate the glorious message of grace and certain victory *to the overcomers*.

The *Book of Revelation* reveals the windup plans and works in this age, and the Lord's beginning a new work in the new age. During every stage of the development of His plans, He has promised to provide attractive opportunities and wonderful advancements for all who will wholly follow Him. These promises are applicable to our physical life on earth as well as to that spiritual life in which we are expected to grow. Because all men are not willing to abandon the thought that they can live victoriously and righteously through their own resources, and because of their attachment to things (desires, teachings, institutions, traditions, movements, persons, or possessions), they limit the fulfillment of God's plan in themselves.

Apathy or rebellion are equally repugnant to God. Man's constructions, his works and ambitions – even though seemingly good – obstruct the fulfillment of God's purpose to erect the glorious structure of His eternal Temple, the "Body of Christ." He has no other course of action but to raze and demolish the old broken and decayed building in order to clear the ground and make way for His new, beautiful and efficient structure.

Since our Lord is busy selecting and gathering workmen and material for His building, even as the demolition proceeds, it seems clear that His workers must know the plan for the progressive razing in considerable detail, if they are to keep clear of falling debris and remain safe, as the old edifice is brought to nought (on protection, see *Ps. 91*). The builders and inhabitants of the broken and decayed building do not wish to lose their handiwork and will continually lobby for slowdown and cessation among the Lord's workers. At the outset we want to be sure of seeing the promises God has made to His "overcomers," those who have overpowered self-interest, but let us also receive His conditions, admonitions and warnings.

In *Matthew 24:24*, God warns there is danger that even the "elect" will be deceived in the end-times if they do not have the Lord's warning and preparation firmly in mind. If there is great danger of so thorough a deceit, what chance will there be for any to escape being subverted by Satan if God's warnings are not understood and taken seriously. If the end-time is at hand, we have a great need of preparation – NOW! If the end-times are yet to come later, we still make no mistake to live in preparation for them. To do so entails an hour by hour, moment by moment walking with Christ, letting Him reshape our lives to His plan, as we are seeking continuous knowledge of and conformance to His will. Either way, there is no good reason why we should not prepare as if the end-times were ready to start, for there is much evidence that the final preparations for the great Day of the Lord are already well under way.

Suggested Objectives

1. To commit God's plan to our minds to the extent that, if necessary, we could continue to live within His plan even if the Bible were made inaccessible to us. The Lord has warned of much opposition coming within our nation.

2. To obey God's command (*Rev. 22:10*) that the Words of this Book be made known and understood, for the period of fulfillment is near. "*Blessed is he who hears and keeps himself true to the things of this prophecy*" (*Rev. 1:3*), for the time is near. This is the only book of the Bible that calls out such a blessing so specifically.

3. To explore and reconfirm what qualifications are necessary to enter the Presence of the Lord, especially during this coming period of Tribulation.

4. To know the signs of the end-time and to know what will transpire. Otherwise the lies put out by Satan through respectable sources will not be recognized. Without such knowledge, even saints will be deceived. Acceptance of even a permissive attitude toward these frauds could mean a personal loss of everything (*Rev. 14:9-10, 19:20-21*).

5. Casual acceptance of the facts that appear convincing to another may bring no personal advantage. Faith in a fallible source may itself fall under stress. You must, by your own efforts, enable the Holy Spirit to convince *YOU*. Therefore, diligent use of Scripture is a basic requirement for attaining the benefits from this study (*Acts 17:11*).

Although mostly disregarded, God's commandment prohibits our interpreting the Bible. No man is to guess at God's interpretation (though many and varied interpretations are pushed). There is only One, The Holy Spirit, Who is to lead into all Truth. We need to ask the Lord Jesus, for He has promised to answer by the Holy Spirit, through the Word (*Jn. 16:13*). Therefore, these notes are not a presentation of multiple-choice interpretations of Scripture, nor of one man's opinion on what "must have been God's intent." This presentation is derived from the Word of prophecy. Sometimes it contrasts with man's ideas so it must be held up to the Lord Jesus by each reader for His confirmation or rejection as His Truth (*Isa. 8:20*). "No prophecy of Scripture is a matter for personal or private interpretation, for no prophecy ever originated because some man willed to do so, but prophecy originated as men spoke from God, men who were borne along by the Holy Spirit" (*II Pet. 1:20-21*, Amplified Bible*). Things are hidden temporarily only as a means to revelation. "For there is nothing hidden except to be revealed, nor is anything kept secret except in order that it be made known" (*Mk. 4:22-24, Matt. 10:26*).

"So you will do well to pay close attention to the prophetic Word, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day breaks through the gloom" (*II Pet. 1:19*). "However, do not put faith in every spirit, but prove or test the spirits to discover whether they proceed from God, for many (sincere but) false prophets have gone forth into the world" (*I Jn. 4:1*). "Do not spurn or deprecate prophetic revelation nor despise inspired instruction, but test and prove all things until you recognize what is good. To that hold fast" (*I Thess. 5:20-21*). "Refute and refuse arguments, theories and reasonings which are set against the true knowledge of God (all initiated in the mind) and lead every thought and purpose away captive into obedience to Christ" (*II Cor. 10:5*). "Until we attain to completeness and maturity, we all see through the glass darkly, a blurred and dimmed image, but then we shall see clearly as face to face, then we shall know and understand fully" (*I Cor. 13:10-12, Jer. 23:20, Dan. 12:4*). Two thousand years ago, 100, or even 50, people had no need of the secrets to be revealed that are now necessary for our end-time generation. The end-time revealing, as the perfection of Jesus Christ in us comes closer, the face to face seeing, the full understanding, has been reserved for the end-time people. The unveiling or unlocking of secrets is now being provided by the Lord to those alert, watching, desiring and asking, but discernment is necessary to escape deceit (*Rev. 12:9*).

*Many of the Scriptures quoted in this volume are taken from *THE AMPLIFIED BIBLE*.

Preface

This volume is written primarily for Christians who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good (*Ps. 34:7-11*), and who are determined to press on into all the Lord has ready for them, no matter what the cost. There is “spiritual milk” included, but also much “meat” (*Heb. 5:11-6:3*). For some, the “meat” will bring valued nourishment; for others the “meat” may bring a type of indigestion. This prophetic material is not for casual or careless listening or reading. If the inquirer is unwilling to examine all of the Scriptural references within their context, or if his approach does not include an earnest and prior asking of God for the progressive revealing of truth that He has promised through His Holy Spirit, that reader may not yet be ready for this revelation (*Acts 17:11*).

Most readers will either reject this expansion of Scriptural prophecy as not being “a word for them,” or they will experience a burning desire to become perfectly dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ – His will, desires and purposes. Christians who truly mean business with the Lord will increasingly understand that there is much more in His plan for them than the initial cleansing by the blood of Christ, much more than initial regeneration, more even than a subsequent experience with the Holy Spirit. Certainly they will agree there is much more than living a morally clean life while hopefully, perhaps passively, waiting for God to surround and inundate them on some future day in some far away place with His perfect righteousness. Those who understand and respond will become a well-trained and equipped army which will brilliantly defeat the enemy. They become the reliable many-membered totally responsive Body to Jesus Christ its Head (*Eph. 4:12-13*). God’s perfect plan is to give everything He has to every Christian who is willing and eager to possess His magnificent abundance through Jesus Christ (*Jn. 16:14-15; Eph. 1:3, 2:18-22; I Cor. 2:9-11*).

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Preparation for Christ's Coming

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PROLOGUE

In this study on preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, we are not to allow the negative aspects of the Bible prophecies or of man's current views of impending trouble for the world to dominate our thinking. True, from the viewpoint of the spiritual world, the issue is that of the destruction of the human race, with the forces of Satan on one side opposing the forces of God on the other. The future we can "see" suggests that man has permitted Satan's power to so influence him, that self-annihilation is an admitted possibility even to the most insouciant. Against such an eventuality, God offers full protection and actual physical escape (*Prov. 3:25,26*) to those who will follow His "escape route" set forth in many patterns throughout the Scriptures. To step out of His pattern either ignorantly or willfully means to step out of His protection; therefore, we will wish to see the pattern clearly.

The Times from Man's Viewpoint

First, let's take a look at the world system strictly from the materialistic viewpoint, a look at where men, Christian and non-Christian, think we are today. The following are comments of well-educated people credited with being experts in their fields. It may be noticed how concurrent many of our crises are with others of equal or greater severity. This overlaying intensifies each crisis and makes what might easily be handled by itself much more difficult to cope with. Over one half the number of all people ever alive on the earth since Adam are living right now, using up and abusing the earth's resources faster than they can be replenished. It took approximately 4,800 years since Noah to 1930 AD to build the world's population up to 2 billion, and it took only from 1930 to 1975 to add another 2 billion, and now from 1995 to 1999 we have reached over 6 billion. The resources of this planet, however, cannot continue to support added billions on a mediocre diet without over-exploiting and destroying the planet's capability for producing food. When diet is poor, people grow up mentally deficient and weaker, less able to produce all that is needed, and less able efficiently to distribute and use whatever is available. The doubling time of world population is now accelerating. In some underdeveloped, poorer countries, the doubling time is even quicker. Therefore, it can be seen that there are proportionally more and more people weakened in mind and body, using up resources increasingly inefficiently in a time when there is already an inadequate reserve to properly feed and support the present population on our planet. Not only is our globe being overfilled, but the capacity of the planet to support its living systems is being destroyed.

Worldwide plagues are a real threat, due to an overpopulation of weakened peoples. We have the added threat of experimentations with viruses, bacteria and genetic manipulation. More than once, recently, it has been only because of Divine providence that a deadly virus did not slip out of the laboratory to kill millions in a short period of time. Even so, new diseases and disquieting variants of more familiar diseases are appearing increasingly. Even back in January, 1971, TV newscasting made mention of a warning being sent out to physicians that the world is on the verge of several widespread, epidemic plagues. It has been calculated that with the present rate automobile use, the air in the USA will become so polluted that life in some areas will be in jeopardy. With the projected growth in facilities for generating power, using non-nuclear methods, *all* the oxygen generated by green plants will be consumed by combustion for power by around 2030. Statistics show that the violent crime rate is now many times greater than the population growth. Earthquakes and volcanic activity are expected to adversely affect weather, agriculture, distribution of water and power, and increase air contamination. Destructive tsunamis, storms and floods of greater intensity are being charted. Just one year of bad weather would result in there being no food surplus in the USA and Canada. Rebellion of people, if continuously intensified as is the pattern, would engulf whole nations within just a few years; a few nations already are.

Predictions of a few decades ago that the world would soon be engulfed in problems of staggering proportions are fulfilling. We now have many such beyond our ability to control: insurrection, terrorism, ethnic conflicts, inflation, strikes, pollution, etc. Billy Graham said it appeared that hordes of demons of violence had been loosed in this country, and he saw this violence leading the USA rapidly into dictatorship. Dr. Raymond Ewall, former advisor to India's government, said the world was on the threshold of the biggest famine in history. James McCracken, Director of Church World Service, stated that the age of famine is already upon us. His thoughts are confirmed by many reports by the media since 1974. Dr. M. S. Livingston, MIT, former President of the Federation of American Scientists, said it was unlikely that the world could avoid a nuclear holocaust, without arms control. Dr. W. G. Pollard, physicist, former Director of Oak Ridge Associated Universities (an organization formed to make use of the advanced scientific facilities there) foresaw relatively close at hand critical shortages of fresh water, petroleum, gas, copper, tin, iron ore, chromium and manganese. He also saw a near-term limitation, due to thermal pollution, in the expansion of power. Paul and William Paddock, with an impressive background of service to many governments, also wrote of unprecedented famine facing the world, especially the underdeveloped nations. They saw those few nations with food supplies being forced to decide which people will starve to death and which will receive a temporary stay from that fate, because there will not be enough food to distribute. They wrote that there is no way now to prevent tens of millions from starving to death. It becomes increasingly clear that as the next doubling of the population rapidly progresses, each person will be able to lay claim to less than half, on the average, of what he now claims for his pleasure and well being.

But note how these crises are compounding. Diminished resources will generate national and international tensions between those who have not and those who have. There is already burgeoning inflation in some countries, while others (especially the U.S.) have unprecedented economic prosperity. And governments are unwilling or unable to deal with it and to handle the increasing loads placed upon them by the compounding of crises. Dictatorship after dictatorship will come into being to repress the rising up of the "have-nots." The repression will lead to yet greater rebellion and greater repression, with increasing inability to supply needs or provide any semblance of stability. It should be obvious that there is now not enough time, not enough money and not enough capable people to even keep up with the problems. Finally, there is the threat of nuclear, chemical and biological war, with international arsenals sufficient to wipe out civilization two or three times, and increasingly available to renegade nation-states.

Unless we can harness and direct these tremendous new forces in the years ahead, the rapidly increasing strains and crises of our times may kill all of us. Anyone who feels optimistic about the future is not even facing the realities of massive pollution and population growth in the next years. We are in the gravest danger of destroying our society, our world, and ourselves in any of a number of different ways.

So much then for what man sees ahead for himself and "his" world.

The Times from God's Viewpoint

Now let us look at a few of the things Holy Scripture has to say prophetically about the time we are in. Jesus told His Disciples that for those outside everything becomes a parable, but to the followers of Christ will be entrusted the secrets (*Mk. 4:10-11*). The Old Testament contains much forward-looking prophecy, so we will examine a few of the passages relating to our subject (*II Tim. 3:16, I Cor. 10:11*).

Exodus 12:3-6

For an understanding of the time period before Christ, we should note that the lamb, a type of Christ, was set apart on the 10th day and then sacrificed four days later on the 14th day (*Jn. 1:27,36*). Prior to Adam's fall there was no need of any sacrifice, but with the introduction of sin, blood had to be shed to provide an atonement (*Gen. 3:21, Heb. 7:22*). With Adam's fall, the Lamb (Christ) was selected in God's plan. There was then a waiting period of 4,000 years to the time of Jesus Christ's death on the Cross, for to the Lord 1,000 years is as a day (*II Pet. 3:8*).

Joshua 6:1-16

Jericho is a type of the enemy of Jesus Christ, and Joshua is a type of the Holy Spirit. For six days the city of Jericho was encompassed, but not until early on the seventh day (*Josh. 6:15*) was the city taken with the blowing of the trumpets and the shout of victory. This typifies the fall of Satan's stronghold in this world at the beginning of the seventh "day." This day is known in Scripture as the Day of the Lord, or the Millennium (1,000 years) of peace and righteousness on earth. From *Exodus 12:3-6*, we know that 4,000 year-days of the seven "day" cycle were fulfilled before Christ; so we know there must be 2,000 more year-days, required to fill out man's work week of 6,000 year-days from Adam's fall before the millennial sabbath rest or Day of the Lord. In that seventh "day," man shall cease from his own works conceived in his perverted mind, for in that seventh "day," God takes over.

Joshua 3:4

The Ark of Testimony was a type of Christ. There was to be a space of *about* 2,000 units between the Ark and the people who followed. Those people who have become prepared are to follow (in time) about 2,000 years after Christ's (the Ark's) crossing over into the Kingdom, when they also are to cross over.

Exodus 19:1-20

This chapter displays a type of the New Covenant through Christ. The people were to be sanctified by Moses (a type of Christ) during two days (today and tomorrow) to be ready for the Lord's coming down on the third day (*19:16-20*) – a type of the second coming of Christ. Here again is shown about two days (2,000) years from the confirming of the New Covenant by the blood of Christ until He returns.

Hosea 5:15

“I (Christ) will return to My place on high, until they repent and seek My face and require Me” (Hos. 6:2). After two days the Lord (Christ) will revive us, quicken us, give us life; on the third day He will raise us up that we may live before Him (raised into His glory in His heavenly Kingdom). ***“His going forth is certain as the dawn; He will come as the latter rain (which matures the fruit harvest)” (Hos. 6:3).*** Taken in context, the fulfillment must be in our time. The time spoken of here extends from the time Jesus returned to His place on high after the resurrection, until He will raise up those who are sufficiently prepared, a period of two days; the two “days” are about 2,000 years.

The New Testament also contains prophecy in relevant pictures.

Luke 13:32

In this context, Jesus could not have been speaking of literal days when He said He would be driving out demons and performing healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day complete his course. This was spoken some time before His ministry ended, and there is no indication His course was completed (perfected) on the literal third day after He spoke these words. So the “today and tomorrow” refers to the two “days” of 2,000 years, during which He has been doing such works by the power of His Spirit through chosen ministers. On the third day, now beginning to dawn, His course shall be made complete (perfected) by joining to Himself, the Head, those of His Body, those matured in His plan from among the called out ones (ecclesia).

John 2:1

On the third day, there was a wedding. The Bible elsewhere foretells of the Bride being joined to her Husband and the wedding guests assembled. Jesus chose this event as a type by which He would manifest His glory (***2:11***). At the time of the wedding, by the washing and filling from the water of the Word and the Spirit (***2:7***), the earthen vessel of man is changed to contain imperishable “wine,” the good wine being saved until the last (***2:9-10***). After two “days,” or about 2,000 years, and at the beginning of the third “day,” there is to be the wedding at which that fully prepared portion of the Body of Christ, the Bride, is joined to her Husband (Christ), followed by the Wedding Supper.

John 4:40-43

Jesus left Judea and the Jews who had rejected Him and stayed two days in the city of Samaria. The word “Samaria” means ‘watchtower’ or ‘lookout tower’ and is a type of the heaven world where Jesus has remained for two “days” (2,000 years) after being rejected and crucified by those of His own nation. On the third day, He returned to Galilee (***Jn. 4:3-4, 43-44***). The word “Galilee” means a circle and refers to the circuitous area of the whole world (***Isa. 40:22***); Scripture also speaks of Galilee of the nations (***Isa. 9:1, Matt. 4:15***). Here again is the consistent pattern of about 2,000 years and then, on the morning of the third millennium, He will return.

However, the coming of the new day in Jewish reckoning began when darkness fell. During the Roman occupation, there were four night watches from 6 p.m. until 6 a.m. which started the new day. It was only during the fourth watch that the light of the new day really began to show. In other words, the visible coming on of the new day is progressive, a withdrawing of the darkness and a coming on of the new light. Further study will confirm that we are now at the entrance into the third day (the Day of the

Lord, the 1,000 years of peace and righteousness), but the evidence of the closing darkness of the second day is still very much present. For better understanding, we should also see that the two “days” (2,000 years) are not necessarily reckoned *only* on the basis of our 365 day solar year. There is also a reckoning on a lunar year of 354.3 days, as well. And the Lord’s *perfect* time is reckoned according to the earth’s original sin-free orbit of 360 days a year. Both of these result in a shortening of time for fulfillment of 2,000 years compared with solar year reckoning.

Every new moon called for the blowing of trumpets and the ***Book of Revelation*** declares there is to be a blowing of the Trumpets to announce the new period. The 2,000 lunar years (354.3 days per year) were completed *about* 1940 A.D. It was then the Trumpets of Revelation *began* to be fulfilled, as we shall see when we get to that portion of our study. However, the reckoning of the 2,000 year period of 360 days a year was completed about 1971 A.D. From this we can see a gradual inception of the third day. But on any basis we can see that the third day’s arrival is to be within our contemporary generation.

In recorded history, something special apparently occurs about every 1,000 years in God’s plan. Adam began the cycle about 4,000 B.C. Enoch was translated without seeing death about 3,000 B.C. Abram was set apart about 2,000 B.C. to become father of a new nation and of nations. The preparation by David for the building of the glorious Temple of Solomon occurred about 1,000 B.C., and Christ was born about 1 A.D. The Church officially split and the world peoples became the modern nations we know today about 1,000 A.D. while the new Millennial Age of Christ’s Kingdom on earth is promised about 2,000 A.D.

Between the mortality of Adam, a new man, and the birth of a new nation in Abram were about 2,000 years during which God worked with individuals. From Abram to Christ was a 2,000 year period, during which God worked with nations. Jesus Christ brought to birth the Body of Christians among all nations, a super-race so to speak. And there is a period of 2,000 years until that Body of chosen people from all nations will possess the earth so that God can work then with the world as a whole.

In many portions of Scripture there is an apparent division of the whole quantity into components of $\frac{2}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$. So it is with the first six “days” of man’s work week which ends in the seventh “day” of rest (***Heb. 4:9-11***). The 6,000 years from Adam to the new age just ahead of us are divided into the $\frac{2}{3}$ part from Adam to Christ (4,000 years), the first man of a new physical race to the first Man of a new spiritual race. The $\frac{1}{3}$ part is from Christ to the inauguration of His Kingdom of Righteousness on earth, or to the *presentation* of the King to the time of His full reign over the whole of His Kingdom.

There are also several periods of 430 years cited in Scripture for our guidance. The period of 430 years spans that time from the giving of a covenant to the time which brings the beginning of freedom from a system of bondage through the application of a new contract. Joseph was called out as a liberator and, 430 years later, God presented a new agreement to Israel, a nation, at Sinai. Moses was called out as a liberator and, 430 years later, there was a reformation from idolatry in Judah. David was called out as a liberator and 430 years later, God announced His plan involving all nations through Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and the prophecies of Daniel. Nehemiah was called out as a liberator and 430 years later, God presented a new agreement through Jesus Christ for individuals in a Body among all nations.

About 590 B.C., *Ezekiel*, in the Old Testament equivalent to the New Testament *Book of Revelation*, prophesied about another 430 years (*Ezek. 4:5-6*). This period saw a partial fulfillment in Jesus Christ, but looks forward into the conclusion of the Church Age as well. Luther was called out to be a liberator (1520-25 A.D.) and 430 years later in our today, God opened up another agreement leading toward *full* deliverance for spirit, soul and *body* and leading to reigning with Him over all the earth. In *lunar timekeeping*, associated with trumpet blowing in Jewish history, this 430 year period concluded when the Revelation Trumpets began to announce the entering of the new age and the fading out of the old age (about 1940). In *perfect time*, this 430 year period concluded in 1948, when the nation of Israel was reborn, a nation always closely associated with the working of the Lord's plans. In *solar time*, this 430 years extended into a new revival of the Holy Spirit's work in about 1954, which will not be dissipated.

Jesus told His Disciples about two signs which would indicate the coming in of the new age and the fading out of the Church Age. Both of these two signs took place in the 1940 decade. He spoke of the fig tree (always a symbol for the nation of Israel) coming into bud and leaf again; the nation of Israel was born on May 14, 1948, and recognized by the U.N. on May 11, 1949 (*Lk. 21:29-31*). He also spoke of the powers of the heavens being disrupted and shaken. This was first demonstrated in July, 1945, when the results of man's disruption or reorientation of the natural energy relationship within the atom was applied for destructive purposes by the detonation of the atom bomb (*Lk. 21:26*). Jesus also said that when all these things taken together *begin* to occur (*Lk. 21:28*), the generation then living shall not pass away until *all* has taken place and been completed (*Lk. 21:32*).

How many years are there in a generation? In the wilderness journey just prior to a crossing over into a promised land, it took about 40 years for that generation to pass away, but Jesus said the generation at the time these things begin to occur shall not have passed away before the Age is completed. Measuring the span of a generation by *Matthew 1:17* averaging about 49 years (but I figure 50 years). A period of about 50 years beyond May 1948-1949, dates of the fig tree nation's *budding* (leafing out), reaches into 1999 to 2000.

Many things are happening in the Bible lands as well as the rest of the world which point to the near return of the Lord Jesus Christ; but there are in addition awesome signs in outer space which lend credence to the belief that one great age is ending and another beginning. While we are not to give our attention to astrology, which leads men into placing their dependence elsewhere than on God, and is an abomination to Him, there is such a thing as astronomy which has to do with the study of the heavenly bodies and the signs, seasons, days and years (*Gen. 1:14*), and the way in which they denote the wonderful plans and arrangements of God (*Ps. 19:1-4*). Nearly 2,000 years ago, the "wise men" in the East gave attention to the placement of a light and its position in the heavens, and were prepared to recognize the time for Christ's coming. The relative positions of the sun and moon, planets and stars are used to indicate the appropriate times for special activity in Scripture. For example, trumpets were blown at the time of the new moon. Passover was celebrated at the full moon, etc. The several portions of the heavens are also arranged in star patterns which can be used as indicators of times of greater importance.

In ancient times, Saturn became identified as the "star" of the prince or ruler of the

world. In December 1977, this planet entered a stay of several years in the zodiacal sign of Virgo, a sign in the heavens specially connected with events affecting God's Chosen People. How very awesome and challenging to note that this event also took place just before the 1980 decade. The Chaldeans were astronomers of note and their name for Saturn was STUR (pronounced Satur). The Chaldean language used the letters for numbers as well as for writing words. The total value of the letters (60-400-6-200) in this word STUR makes it one of the many words whose number sum is 666, an association of more than passing interest when we study *II Thessalonians 2* and *Revelation 13*.

Since the Lord is the same yesterday, today and always, He uses the same patterns again and again in what He does. What are some of these which may be associated with the dawning of the new day? Jesus said, ***"I am the Root and the Offspring of David"***; – He also said, ***"I am the Bright and Morning Star"*** (*Rev. 22:16*), revealing two descriptive titles having to do with His first and His second comings respectively. When Jesus came to earth before, He was the Root and became the Offspring of David from the moment He was born as a babe in Bethlehem. His birth, then, is a starting point which may be compared or contrasted with a starting point for His second coming. But following His birth, there was a preparation period of 30 years before He *suddenly came* to His Temple for its cleansing (*Mal. 3:1*). At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus cleansed the physical Temple at Jerusalem (*Jn. 2:13-17*).

This act was symbolic of the fact that the cleansing of His Temple-nation of the Jews had then begun. Subsequently, His entire ministry of 3 ½ years was given to that cleansing, driving out literally thousands of evil spirits from the people and the land. People by the thousands were set free from possessing, oppressing, vexing and afflicting spirits, and were healed of all kinds of diseases and infirmities (*Matt. 4:23-24, 8:16, 10:1,8*). However, the religious leaders turned the people against Jesus, so they rejected and crucified Him. Jesus foresaw this and prophesied the consequences in parable form (*Matt. 12:43-45*). The picture presented was that of the man delivered from an unclean spirit, who did not receive anything positive to fill its place. The spirit returned with seven other spirits worse than itself. They entered the man, so that his last state was worse than the first. Jesus gave the application of His teaching by saying, "So shall it be with this wicked generation." The spirits Jesus had driven from the land returned, bringing hosts of others with them. In the following years the state of the Jews became increasingly worse, until their Temple and nation were completely destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.; those not killed were scattered throughout the Gentile lands.

If Jesus was the Root and the Offspring of David at His first coming, then Jesus as the Bright and Morning Star refers to His coming again, following the night of spiritual darkness which He indicated would descend upon the world (*Jn. 9:4*). Since the Lord chooses to use His patterns repetitively, should we not expect the pattern of His first coming to be repeated with an inception and preparation period before He again suddenly comes to His Temple? The very symbolism of the morning star seems to show this. The morning star is the sun which lights up the eastern sky as a new day *begins* to dawn (*Ps. 84:11*). So Peter writes, ***"We have the prophetic word made firmer still, to which you will do well to pay close attention as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Day or Morning Star rises in your hearts"*** (*II Pet. 1:19*). The Day of the Lord of which Peter wrote is now dawning and the Day Star (Christ) is now rising in a new and living way in many hearts. We are now *in* the time of preparation

leading up to His sudden coming to His Temple again – this time to cleanse it for good.

When was the beginning of this end-time when the light of the Morning Star began to be seen? At Jesus' birth, as the Root and Offspring of David, a star appeared as a sign (**Matt. 2:1-2**); about 33 years later He was recognized as the Son of God (**Matt. 16:16, Lk. 9:20, Jn. 20:28**). Should we not then expect God to give another sign in this end-time to indicate the inception period of the Bright and Morning Star? Consider this: After almost 2,000 years without a homeland, the Jews declared themselves a reborn nation in 1948 and the *star* of David began to flutter over the land of Palestine. This was the ensign mentioned by Isaiah (**Isa. 11:9-12**) which would be set up by God for the assembling of the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah. However, it was not until July, 1949 that the last contender, Syria, signed the treaty acknowledging Israel's statehood. Without attempting to set dates, the parallels seem to be more than a coincidence, and point up several relationships which strongly indicate the proximity of the end of the Church Age (**II Pet. 3, I Thess. 5:1-9, Amos 3:7**).

What will take place when Jesus again suddenly comes to His Temple, following the preparation period? He said that those who look for Him must be ready, awake, alert and watching (**Lk. 12:37**). To those not ready and watching, even among His household of the Church, He comes as a thief in the night (**:39-40**). One who comes as a thief comes to take something away. The only evidence the unwatchful, dozing householder has that the thief has been there is that something of value is missing. The Lord also says of those who consistently reverence Him, and talk to one another about Him, and think of His character and influence, that they are His peculiar treasure, His jewels (**Mal. 3:16-17**).

In His letter to the Church at Thyatira, Jesus mentions His coming again. He gives certain promises to those who are by then overcomers, and pledges Himself to them as the Morning Star (**Rev. 2:25-28**). The pledge is the promissory betrothal from the Bridegroom to the Bride company during this time of preparation. Does not this pledge have in view the ascension of the Bride in an end-time duplication of Christ's own ascension, as the Morning Star? The period of the Morning Star's very early light is the time for the overcomers of the Bride company to make themselves ready (**Matt. 25:10, Rev. 19:7**). Jesus said, "You also must be ready; otherwise the Son of man comes at an hour when you don't anticipate Him" (**Lk. 12:40**).

He also warns, "Take heed to yourselves, lest. . .that day come upon you suddenly, like a trap or noose, for this snare will come upon all who live on the face of the earth" (**Lk. 21:34-35**). The word for snare here indicates a net or small rope used to trap birds or small animals. The name Rebekah, in the Old Testament, means "rope" or a "noose." As a maiden ensnares by her beauty, thus she ensnared Isaac. So was Jesus ensnared into death because of His love for the Church (**Eph. 5:25**); but in this end-time the snare or trap which is suddenly to come upon the world unawares is Christ's taking of His jewels, His Bride company. It was symbolized by Isaac (a type of Christ) taking Rebekah to be his bride (**Gen. 24:67**). It is also symbolized in the "catching up" or ascension of the Manchild group of matured, Spirit-prepared ones (**Rev. 12:5**), who are then seen as the 144,000 group of Firstfruits in heaven (**Rev. 14:1-4**). The dawning period of the Morning Star will have come when the Lord suddenly comes to His Temple to take His Bride company.

The consummation of the time of betrothal and preparation then makes possible a

further coming to His Temple by the Lord. As the sunrise always follows the dawn, ought we not to expect the Sun, the Son of Righteousness, to arise with healing in His wings, the extensions of Himself (*Mal. 4:2*)? This further coming and arising, *after* taking out His jewels from the household of the Church, speaks of the great “latter rain” outpouring and revival which will take place shortly after the Bride is taken. Following a time of waiting in the “upper room,” those of the remaining Church who have humbled themselves in a time of continuous prayer and seeking the Lord are to experience the sudden coming of the Holy Spirit in a second Pentecost. More far-reaching than that of *Acts 2:2*, this will empower the Church for its Tribulation ministry, to cleanse and prepare a great multitude (*Rev. 7:9*) and to meet the Lord in the air at His coming at the close of the Tribulation (*Matt. 24:29-30, I Thess 4:13-17*).

The fullness of God’s purpose through His Church in this end-time will not come until He has shocked the Church to its knees through the bodily translation and glorification of the Firstfruits Bride company (*Rev. 14:1-4*). The Bride’s disappearance will constitute His sudden coming to His Temple and the beginning of the 3 ½ years of cleansing. During the Tribulation, He will cleanse both the Temple of His Church throughout Christendom, and the Temple-nation of the Jews (*Mal. 3:1-3*). The prophecy through Malachi had an initial application and a partial fulfillment in Christ’s first coming; but the complete fulfillment of the covenant of peace (*Mal. 2:5*) will be experienced with His second coming.

The prophecy also has an application to the present moment, for it is *now*, in this day of preparation, that a “remnant” is being cleansed and purged. God is moving by His Spirit today. Now is our day of preparation. For those who will not limit the Holy One of Israel, it can be a time of increasing blessing and power, ever going from glory to glory (*II Cor. 3:18*), as the Day Star rises in their hearts (*II Pet. 1:18-19*). But we are not to become so absorbed in the future that we miss what He has for us today. He is the God of the NOW, the I AM (*Ex. 3:14*).

How mighty and awesome are the events on the horizon in this day! Seemingly insurmountable problems beset the human race, problems of a scope and complexity such as the world has never seen and for which man has no solution even close to the answer. We can, as many will, bury our heads in the sand and hope the troubles will go away, but the inexorable march of history will eventually catch up with those who do. Is there not a God, a mighty and loving Creator, who has planned and programmed the coming impasse so that those He loves might have the opportunity to see His mighty hand of deliverance from a system which already has the mark of death on it? Through these developments, are not multitudes being ushered into the Valley of Decision so that they might have the opportunity to know the living Christ and receive Life forevermore (*Joel 3:14-16*)?

There is an almost too obvious concentration of indicators all pointing to the time in which we live as the most important time in millions of years of God’s planning. Even those few years, during which God Almighty took on human form to teach His Disciples in Palestine and then give His life for them, were preparatory for this era. Without question, the darkest time mankind has ever seen will soon be here, bringing intensified wickedness, rebellion and oppression; but for those willing to become fully prepared in the Lord’s pattern, it will be a time of more light, cooperative enabling and power, protection and joyful anticipation than mankind has ever experienced. To be fearful or

at peace will be totally the result of individual choice on the question of becoming fully prepared on the Lord's schedule.

Before leaving the subject of the time-table in Scripture, and the signs and indicators now being seen both on earth and in space, let us be aware of a real danger. Sincere believers, as well as others, may become so engrossed in watching for the *signs* of Christ's coming as to remain completely unprepared for Him, or even miss Him altogether. It seems almost incredible, but it is fact that the religious and Bible students of 1,900 years ago were all expecting the coming of the Messiah; they were studying all the prophecies about His coming and had all the details at their fingertips. Nevertheless, they so misinterpreted the meaning of the Scriptures upon which they concentrated that, when the Messiah arrived, scarcely any of them were able to accept the fact that He really had come. The mode of His coming was so different from what their interpretations of the prophecies had led them to expect, that they could not adjust their concepts to fit in with the glorious plan God Himself designed at the beginning and personally came to implement.

Are not all the patterns given in Scripture for our instruction (*II Tim. 3:16*), and is not a similar lack of preparation and a missing of His second coming grievously possible for the religious leaders and Bible students through their following of *man's interpretation* of God's plan as revealed in Scripture (*II Pet. 1:20-21*)? Jesus spoke as though such a thing would happen when He returned. There will be Christians earnestly watching for the signs of His coming, even joyfully expecting to be caught up to join Him in the air, who will be so unready for His coming that, just like irreligious people, they will be unable to participate in it.

We must become very much aware of the signs and indicators, but we must know their place in God's larger plan, so that we can accurately respond to His requirements. The study we are now undertaking is to lead into an understanding and practice of the pattern God designed for us, so that each one who cares enough can become prepared, on schedule.

The Grand Plan

God's plan for those who love Him, those willing and eager to conform (*Jn. 14:21, II Jn. 6*), goes far beyond this life and this age, even beyond the accumulation of as many ages as can be visualized, far beyond and above the next millennium age of peace and righteousness over all the earth. The immediate stage of the fulfillment of God's plan is His work with the Body of Christ to regain all that Adam lost, and then to enable progress so far beyond as to make Adam's standing in God's very presence seem only a beginning.

God's intention for mankind is to reflect Himself, His power, knowledge, wisdom, accomplishment and love. That reflection has to be a very large one to show the fullness and completeness of Himself (*Gen. 1:27-28*). Mankind, operating within God's plan, is intended to subdue the whole earth in the sense of developing the planet and all that is upon it, wresting it from the evil forces of Satan. Therefore, man must reach the stature necessary to exercise authority and dominion over the earth, administering God's plan in a reflection of Him. To approach this stature, man must eat of the Tree of Life so that Christ (the Tree of Life) might be integrated into man, and reflected through him (*Gen. 2:16-17, Eph. 4:10, Rev. 2:7*). Since man took a detour off the highway of God's plan, (*Gen. 3:22-24*), God first intends to bring man back to that High Way in a restoration of man to His ongoing plan (*Gen. 3:14-15*). So first, there must be a subduing of the "world" within man, the microcosm of the "birds of the air" (thoughts), the "fish of the sea" (desires and emotions of the soul) and the "animals" (carnal drives, native talents and avarice), and development of a new nature (new life-habit-patterns) (*Gen. 1:26*).

Man's progress toward the attainment of God's purpose is exclusively through the corporate Body of Christians. He therefore provides that Body with training ministries to build it up. By these means, the Body of Christians is to be brought to maturity and become fully equipped like an army trained for the Lord's use (*Eph. 4:11-12*) to bring the whole earth – microcosm and macrocosm – within His plan. The minimum requirement for spiritual maturity in this age is *proven* dedication to Christ's plan and tested reliability. This is confirmed by the fact that only that dedication in the man Jesus Christ proved sufficient to overcome the strong and wily Satan.

In order for the true Christians to become adequately matured for graduation during the very few years remaining in this Church Age, God requires an adequate and accurate knowledge and comprehension of the nature of Jesus Christ. Only that can ensure an absolute unity in faith that will actively respond to God's will (*Eph. 4:5, Heb. 11:1-8*). There are to be no casual Christians indefinitely in the Lord's plan (*Matt. 12:33, Rev. 3:16*). Without an adequate knowledge of the Truth and the Way, the members of the Body will be tossed to and fro by the deceits of men (*Eph. 4:14, Matt. 24:24*).

The Bible states that God entrusted this world and its atmospheric envelope in stewardship to Lucifer (Satan), while that mighty being was still found to be perfect (*I Cor. 10:26, Jn. 12:31, I Jn. 5:19, Eph. 2:2, Ezek. 28:12,15*). Since a steward must be

found faithful (*I Cor. 4:2*), and Satan has been found a rebel, destroying that with which he was entrusted (*Isa. 14:5-6, 12*), God will reclaim the stewardship, after Satan's rebellion has served in completing that part of God's plan for accelerating the maturing of a first portion of the Body of Christians to the minimum standard. Then the offspring of the woman (the true Church) will trample Satan and his followers (*Gen. 3:15, Rev. 12:5-8*). In fact, we may become those "feet" who will trample Him (*Rom. 16:20*), if we will prepare. However, if we continue in the ways Satan taught Adam; for example, reliance on God-excluding reasoning, self-motivated desire, natural strength and material resources, we will lose the contest just as quickly as Adam did. Satan is strong, supernaturally strong, so other weapons and other strategies are necessary.

Again, from the viewpoint of the spiritual world, the issue is that of the destruction of the human race; for God's chosen weapon against Satan's rebellion is a remnant of utterly dedicated men and women which chooses to line up wholly with God. There will be no reruns of the showdown with Satan. The army God will use *must* previously have been trained and tested in practice. Participation in this elite and elect force requires development of unfailing loyalty and reliability, a perfected response to obey in absolute faith (even without always understanding why), a skill in using spiritual weapons with full effectiveness, and knowledge of how to back-up, strengthen and preserve those others by his side in the Christian army. This development can only take place during the actual practice of listening and conforming within and among those who are Christians.

Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and then all the other things will be added (*Matt. 6:33*). These two things are first: The seeking of His government (Kingdom), His Lordship, through repentance that is deep and thorough; and the seeking of His righteousness in continuous and faithful progress in demonstration of righteous thought, attitude, purpose and response to the pattern Jesus Christ presented in His own life (*I Jn. 3:6-7, I Pet. 4:17-18, Rom. 8:29*). Nothing less will be adequate.

"Just believing," as usually understood, brings nothing of itself. Only what the Lord places within will be of any use in protection and dispossession of the enemy; everything we can present to the Lord from our own physical inheritance is a drag. His leading and helping, His gift, His ministries powered by the Spirit are absolutely necessary – all of them by His grace within the corporate Body of Christians. Without them the Body cannot stand in the final contest with Satan's hosts, and God has chosen *no* alternates, only this Body. Whether it is large or small, He will enable this Body to complete the job, but only those adequately prepared will be able to participate. Other Christians will be turned back (*Matt. 7:21-27*), as with Gideon's army in which 300 were employed out of 32,000 called, because most were more concerned about their own feelings and satisfactions. But that 300 did the job against a multitude like the sand (*Jdg. 7:2-7, 12*).

Those who are prepared shall do greater works than Jesus did because He is now glorified (*Jn. 14:12*). Who are the *Manifested Sons* (*Rom. 8:19-23*) except those who have become prepared? Only in them is the completed heirship of adult adoption or placement which allows full exercise of all rights to that son. They alone are to be the primary instruments for setting the world free of decay and corruption by showing the way, a High Way; they alone will demonstrate a full redemption, including the redemption of mortal bodies to deathless heavenly glory or earthly glory (*I Thess. 5:23-24*), before Christ returns personally.

The Specific Plan

Because of lack of understanding and lack of willingness to enter into and apply the training necessary for subsequent service in the Lord's army, Christians in these concluding days of the age are even now living far below their covenanted (contracted) rights.

Isaiah speaks directly to today's spiritual Israel (*Gal. 3:29; Rom. 2:28-29, 4:16*), of which each man may be a part if he chooses to leave the structure of *all* limitations erected by man (Babylon), and come into the Lord's providing (*Isa. 51:1-4, 12-16, 52:1-12; Jer. 50:4-9; Rev. 18:2-5*). Before the Kingdom of peace and righteousness can be established on earth, all that is in any way against God's plan must be utterly swept away (*Matt. 22:44, Heb. 12:26-29*). When every person remaining on earth is sincerely seeking and welcoming His rule, then will His Kingdom of righteousness begin. It is inherent in His plan that He will not force His will upon anyone, but everyone who asks from his heart has a clear chance to participate fully in active cooperation. Our loving and concerned Lord offers the potential of His complete protection, physical as well as spiritual (*Ps. 91:2-13*), for He is not willing that any should perish (*II Pet. 3:9, Matt. 18:14*). Therefore, all who perish will do so by hastening the calamity upon themselves (*Prov. 26:27, Isa. 5:18, Jer. 2:19*), through willful ignorance or knowing disobedience, in spite of our Lord's provision (*II Thess. 1:6-9*). If we have the Book and don't read it – that is willful ignorance. If we know what pleases Him and don't do it – that is knowing disobedience. If we read and see what He offers and don't take *all* He offers – that too is knowing disobedience, for He offers us nothing we do not need. Dare we presume that man's childlike evaluation of what is offered is more accurate than the Creator's?

The Bible is full of God's intention and His offer to build up a people in His likeness. This applies to individuals, but more specifically to a welded-together Body of people having a unity of purpose, plan and objective within that Body which is in complete unity with *His* purpose, *His* plan and *His* objective. The result is to develop a capability and a practice of eventually reflecting an accurate likeness of Himself in the full stature of the man Jesus Christ here on earth (*Eph. 4:12-13*), and accomplishing greater things than Jesus Christ accomplished while on earth in human flesh (*Jn. 14:12, I Pet. 2:9*). Those who do overcome the obstacles will sit with Him and co-rule the whole earth (*Rev. 3:21*). This progression is for all exercising sufficient diligence in preparation, for there is only one way open for proceeding toward and reaching God's objectives. There is no other successful approach except through Jesus Christ, none except through the exquisitely precise *patterns* He designed and recorded for us to follow (*Rev. 15:4*).

Therefore, each person needs to know what His patterns are, to separate those from man-devised patterns which might appear almost as good, and to steadfastly endeavor to follow in those which *He* presents. To know them first requires the establishment of

a firm alignment with Jesus Christ so He has our permission to tell and expose us to what needs to be done as we search out His will. It requires the continuous ingesting and digesting of His instruction Book, and a continuous willingness toward and cooperation with His Holy Spirit as He seeks to impart training and leading. It requires a continuous two-way communication (prayer and listening). No element can be omitted in His plan. It is also a vital part of His plan that this preparing be done among others who are of like mind (**Heb. 10:24-25**) so that Christ as the Head of the Body can utilize the “hands” of the Body to clothe it and the “feet” of the Body to support it, etc. (**I Cor. 12:27**). Under His rules, preparation hardly can be accomplished solo.

In order for there to be a building up in the Lord’s design, there must first be a “restoration” (literally revolution) to the beginning He requires. Many such pictures of revolution are given in the Bible for our edification so we will not miss its last cycle in the Church Age. The Apostles of Christ were moving in this pattern and were teaching others to do so. But even in that time of great light there was also a pervasive moving away from the Lord’s design (**II Thess. 2:7**), replacing it gradually with man’s preferences, additions and subtractions, until the Church entered the Dark Ages with almost no spiritual light. Partial restorations (revolutions) were brought about through such men as Luther, Wesley, Huss, Calvin, Darby, etc., but each attempt eventually was turned off into a parking lot or detour and fell short of full turning about.

For contemporary application, Jesus requires a return to the Church’s primary love, placing Christ at the head again, instead of hierarchies of organization (**Rev. 2:1-7**). First, members of the Body must be willing to allow *Jesus* to be Lord without interference from man’s opinions or competition from man’s “good” works. First, they must recognize our Lord did design a plan for establishing and building His Body and the members of His Body which needs no improving, no strengthening, no additions and no subtractions. There must be a turning toward a willingness to accept the plan He designed and to a willingness to accept all that His plan offers to the members of His Body. He calls for a fervency of dedication (**Rom. 12:1**) and for the possession of all He offers, because all of that is an absolute necessity (**Rev. 3:14-22**). He says that living in man’s religious patterns, the best of them (**Matt. 5:20**), brings no lasting results, even from much application.

God’s house must be built from *His* materials and in *His* design, or the “dew” and the “produce” will be held back (**Hag. 1:4-11**). Before there can be any worthy building, a completed and firm foundation must be in place (**Matt. 7:24-27**). There must be open and honest repentance before the Lord for both past offences committed and the residuals of bitterness left in the heart by the actions of others toward us. Also to be included is the vitalizing and purifying by the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:8**) which Jesus Christ said would follow in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:5, 8:17-18, 19:6; Heb. 6:1-2**). Subsequently, there should be continuous striving to live life in the purity and righteousness which our pattern, Jesus Christ, lived (**Matt. 6:33, I Pet. 2:21, 4:18**). There needs to be that personal “coming to know Him” (**Phil. 3:9-11**) which is accompanied by maturing toward and into the stature of the fullness of Christ (**Eph. 4:13**).

When an earthly people do enter His purposes and His plan to reach His objectives, being built together as living stones in His earthly temple, the glory of that latter house or dwelling place will be far greater than the glory in the Temple of Solomon. They will experience peace and prosperity (**Hag. 2:7-9**), because that matured Temple on earth

will be a Body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself (*Eph. 3:19*). It is to the members of this uniquely designed Body who have thus made themselves ready that Jesus will return. Other believers, not then ready, will miss participating in His return until they become willing to make themselves ready (*Matt. 7:21-23; Rev. 19:7, 22:14*). It is those who have thoroughly dedicated and prepared themselves within the frame of God's plan upon whom the "latter rain" will fall in an outpouring of Holy Spirit empowerment such as the world has never seen (*Joel 2:25-32, Acts 2:17-21*). Only those so prepared will be capable of handling such great power and glory. It is these who have made themselves fully ready to whom Jesus will later bring *full* salvation in a redemption of the whole man, in spirit, soul *and* body (*Heb. 9:28, I Thess. 5:23, Rom. 8:23*).

The Lord also promises a great shaking out and shaking down of *every* organization and development which does not have Him as its designer and builder. Much of what man considers to be fine and good and surely pleasing to God will be shaken completely to pieces, along with all that is recognized to be of man's building. The Bible contains several records of God's tumbling down and bringing to nothing what man has attained by working apart from God. He also tells of *one more time* when all things will be shaken in a final removal of everything not of God, so that only what is of His design and building will remain (*Heb. 12:26-27, Rom. 9:27-29, Isa. 2:5-22, Rev. 18:1-8*). The need for preparation and building to withstand this shaking certainly reaches beyond the initial acceptance of Jesus Christ and beyond a subsequent experience with the Holy Spirit.

What is required of those who decide to be made ready regardless of what it costs? Jesus said they must be *doing* the will and commandments of their Lord (*Lk. 12:35-48*). As preparation, He pointedly suggests that we, here and now while waiting for His coming, live according to the laws and *minimum* standard of the Kingdom of Heaven which He taught in the Sermon on the Mount, and which He demonstrated so faithfully and gloriously in His own life through His reactions to everything that happened to Him. His intention is that we copy Him (*Jn. 14:6, Lk. 6:40, Rom. 8:29, Eph. 1:5*), living as He lived (*I Jn. 2:5-6*), and becoming righteous as He is (*I Jn. 3:6-7*), for the *righteous* are barely saved (*I Pet. 4:17-18*). In His pattern, we are called to become pure as He is (*I Jn. 3:3*), become holy as He is (*I Pet. 1:15-16*), and become perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (*Matt. 5:48*). It is written that qualifying Christians must become holy and blameless and without spot or wrinkle in His sight while yet in their physical bodies here on earth (*Phil. 2:15, Eph. 5:27, II Pet. 3:14*). That requires some doing! This goal no man can reach on his own. It requires the enabling such as only Jesus Christ has offered. *The first thing is the seeking of His rule and His righteousness.* After the engaging of that first thing comes the adding on of the other things which lead to full protection, the demonstration of complete victory, and the possession of *full* salvation. These requirements are for each Christian because God does not play favorites – what He requires of one, He requires of all (*Rom. 2:11*). Only the violent (for "knowing" Christ) can storm the gates of heaven (*Matt. 11:12*). The protection and enabling against the shaking out is according to the preparation; full preparation – full protection and enabling; some preparation – some protection and enabling; little preparation – little protection and enabling.

If we have read the signs and indicators correctly in the world around us and in the Scripture, there are yet a few years, but very few, until the wickedness of the evil spirits

and the wickedness of man will be filled up and completed in that consummating battle between the forces of our God and the forces of Satan, our adversary. Ours is the generation; this is the time in which we can begin to come to know the exact year and day of the initiation of the Great Tribulation (*Amos 3:7, Mk. 4:22*), the period of intolerable anguish which is coming upon all the earth (*Matt. 24:8,21*). Since Satan no longer has access to Jesus Christ Himself, having been overcome by Him (*Lk. 10:18-19*), the battle will be of both a spiritual and physical nature against the Body of Christians *on earth*, and will climax in a world war of far greater intensity than that of the previous two World Wars (*Ezek. 21:11-17*). Christians will be progressively finding it necessary to move into preparation and protection such as many have not thought really necessary, once they “have Jesus in their life and begin to love Him.” Satan and his hosts will see to it that the pressures from national and world governments and from a new extension of socialistic economics will drive people into submission to his plan through fear and apprehension (*Lk. 21:26*). Also, overcoming deceptions will be poured out on people, so subtle as to almost seduce the fully prepared saints (*Matt. 24:24*).

What has our Lord told us is necessary to withstand the flood of evil (*Rev. 12:15*) and the onslaught of hosts of demon spirits (*Rev. 9:1-3*)? Before man’s outer world can be subdued for development in God’s pattern, the inner world (microcosm within man) must be subdued and brought into God’s plan. Man’s thoughts (birds in the air), desires and emotions (fish of the sea), carnal drives, native talents and avarice (beasts of the field) must first be brought under rule of the spirit, instead of continuing under soul dominion (*Gen. 1:26*). Jesus said we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength and all our mind – our whole being (*Lk. 10:27*). And loving the Lord brings the conforming to His plan (*Jn. 14:21*).

In summary, since it is written that the righteous barely receive completed salvation (*1 Pet. 4:18*), the first things in the necessary preparation for protection and victory are the willing acceptance of the kingly rule of Jesus Christ, and the application of His imparted, superphysical enabling for continuing to live in His righteousness – conforming to His will in thought, attitude, purpose, and action (*Matt. 6:33*).

Repentance

Near-term attainment of full redemption and protection cannot even be approached without initiating the Lord's plan in daily life. The plan calls for progressive acceptance of His Kingdom rule in practice. First, things must be made firm and lasting. He cannot be ruler in any segment of our living which has not been specifically presented to Him for His action on it. Neither can He be ruler if there is any unwillingness to respond in active cooperation to *whatever* He desires. He cannot truly be ruler (Lord) in all the areas of man's life, unless His supernatural enabling has been received and is used; in our own strength and abilities, we are utterly incapable of consistently obeying God's commands (*I Cor. 12:3*). The knowledge of this inadequacy was forcefully presented for our instruction in living drama by the Israelites, God's *Chosen People*. They sincerely promised and intended to obey God's commands, but continuously they were disobedient from the time Moses acquainted them with God's requirements 1,300 years before Christ.

It was only through the personal ministry of Jesus Christ that a supernatural enabling was made available, in a precisely described pattern, to men of all nations. This was for the express purpose of making the rulership of Christ possible and practical in the life of each individual Christian and in the whole Body of Christians. But, because of accepting the deceits of Satan, most men do not recognize even the potential of becoming totally and consistently obedient. Thus, most have not searched out and availed themselves of the miracle Jesus Christ made ready for application at the beginning portion of each Christian's "born-again" life. Instead, man ingests lies direct from hell. For example, we hear repetitively, "God helps those who help themselves"; "I'm only human"; "no one is perfect"; "you're a product of your environment"; "you can't win"; "if you can't beat them, join them." But God says don't join them, beat 'em – with God's love!

The first things in God's pattern are the kingly rule of Jesus Christ and His righteousness (*Matt. 6:33*). How does this statement of Jesus correlate elsewhere in Scripture with His first requirement of repentance (*Matt. 3:2, Mk. 1:4, Acts 2:38*)? Did you repent as you first came to Jesus? Did He forgive you as a result of that repentance? You affirm that you did repent and that He did forgive, because Scripture declares that He took *all* sin and rebellion upon Himself (and sickness and pain also), when He died on the Cross (*Isa. 53:4-5, 12; Matt. 8:17*) – that is, all of those things we faithfully present to Him for His action. You probably have a fairly clear concept in your mind of what constitutes repentance. For most, repentance means seeing something that does not appear righteous, becoming sorry about it, sometimes with tears. Then that repentance should terminate with asking for and receiving God's forgiveness.

How does this compare with the Bible picture of repentance, for example in *Matthew 21:28-32*? In the context of the subject of repentance (:21-25), Jesus told of two

sons who were asked to work in the Father's "vineyard." One refused, but then challenged his mind and did so. There was a change of mind indicated, but there was not necessarily sorrow, tears, or even an effort to notify the Father of the change of intention in this case. The repentant son just began to work. The important thing in understanding this parable is seeing that the son put into action his intent to be obedient. Repentance cannot be true or full without beginning to live out the change. Repentance sometimes may not incorporate being sorry as an emotional reaction; neither do tears make a true repentance, though both sorrow and tears *may* be involved. It is not true repentance until walking in the new direction (*Lk. 3:7-8*).

Does God require a once-for-all repentance only from non-believers on the point of turning to Christ? No, He requires true repentance of Christians also, immature and mature, every time there is need for it (*I Cor. 15:9-10; I Tim. 1:15-16; Rev. 2:5,16,22, 3:19*). For most Christians, true repentance is a thing of the past, it is to be in the present, and it *should* also be a thing of the future. Since our God is a righteous God and because He gifted man with a free will, He cannot thrust or force anything upon man which he will not ask for and willingly receive. Although He did provide for the taking of *all* sins of mankind upon Himself on the Cross, He cannot deal with any specific act or attitude of sin or rebellion to lift it from the individual man and include it in the "all," unless that item of rebellion is willingly offered up to Him to be dealt with. So often we find there are one or more things we would prefer to keep hold of, at least for a while longer, and there is a multitude of these things which we don't remember or recognize as needing to be submitted to Him. The rebellions that must be dealt with include overt acts or omissions, but also the effects left in us by experiencing a wrong or suspected wrong from another. Resentment, vindictiveness, hatred, self-defending indignation, critical thoughts (even if not formed into words), jealousy, envy, bitterness, etc., all are not right before God and contrary to His will for our good. In his sight they require repentance (an act of "walking" in the other direction) and forgiveness so that our praying can be effective and our listening sensitive. Not reading the Bible enough requires repentance. Unbelief of God's Word requires repentance. No response to what God offers requires repentance. Not praying and not listening requires repentance. A lack of repentance requires repentance.

There is also the "conditioning" that develops in our being from having lived in a pattern of rebellion over a period of weeks and months and perhaps years or millennia. Acts of rebellion may be repented of and dealt with; but a root may still remain, perhaps guilt or self-condemnation, perhaps something else. In many instances it has been covered over in the subconscious and remains there as an invisible doorway through which the enemy gains access. It may be a trigger which he can spring to dump us into a pool of discouragement or despair which effectively cuts off God's ministering to our need and forces us to move away from the constantly victorious and joyful life God provides. Treating the symptoms brings a temporary benefit, but only cutting out the root eliminates the symptoms (*Matt. 3:10*). There are also things needing cancellation and erasing which do not originate within ourselves, things which are transmitted or which "wipe off" from others with whom we have associated. You know that you can pick up a spirit of discouragement or frustration or even futility from just being with or talking with another person who is broadcasting these qualities, and so it is with many other types of impartations also. His forgiving erases the record of wrongs; but there is more involved. What about the effects from the thought and act that go out to cause damage

– even out into space – to return later with added impetus on our own beings? That too must be blocked and nullified. But there is no use of His doing so unless and until He sees repentance (*Isa. 43:25, 44:22*). Our righteous Lord cannot unilaterally deal with something that has not been presented to Him for His action. Each of these things call for repentance.

Each of us, to a minor or major degree, has engaged in self-deception through asking the Lord to forgive *all* our sins in general and then let the matter drop there. True, He has made provision to forgive all our sins *when* we come in true repentance, but repentance is an active response in a new direction; it can only be initiated *after* recognizing what needs forgiveness. True repentance in the Scripture pattern requires an act of *walking away* from something and of *walking in* the new something. How can we even think of separating or severing ourselves from a hurtful thing if we don't recognize that which we are to leave? In this view, there can be no thorough repentance for something not known to our conscious minds.

Therefore, God says to come and *reason* with Him (that the thing may become known) so that our sins can become white as snow (*Isa. 1:16-19*). Therefore, He says we are to ask Him to search and know our hearts (*Ps. 139:23-24*), and bring to our conscious recognition those things that have been submerged and covered over, whether they exist because of sin initiated by ourselves alone, whether they are the results of what others have done in wronging us, or whether they are from impartations received during physical contact (especially sinful physical contact) or social contact (especially “eating of the same things”) (*I Cor. 5:11*). The Bible states that man's sorrow (introspection) is deadly, but that godly grief produces repentance (turning from and turning to) which *leads* to deliverance; the act of walking in the new thing brings about the deliverance from the old. ***“Let the wicked (any not fully purified) forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55:7).***

Thorough repentance is not accomplished in a few moments, an hour, a day, or often in weeks. By invitation, the Lord must search our inner being and progressively expose the rebellions hidden there before they can be given to Him for eradication. It is a cooperative venture – His doing the searching while we are reviewing the periods of our life during which the things might have been hidden. The purpose of “soul searching” is not to dig up all the garbage in past life for another review, for that can be devastating, but an exercise of eager and willing reception for knowing things forgotten and overlooked as the Holy Spirit brings them to the light of our minds. This process takes time for most people.

Now we can begin to see the association of true repentance with the righteousness which Christ requires. True repentance cannot be accomplished without beginning to walk in Christ's righteousness; the “turning from” necessitates a “turning to.” Also, walking in Christ's righteousness cannot become fact until there has been the exercise of true repentance; in order for there to be the “turning to,” there must have been the “turning from” so that the result retains no mixture. Now it is also more easily seen that there should not only be the initial repentance in turning from the world system toward God's rule, but there should then be the progressive repentance for Christians in which there is turning from specific error, weakness and volitional rebellion and turning to the righteous walk to replace the old.

Because this turning requires supernatural help, the Lord has provided the availability of extra power at the beginning of the regenerated life for all who desire to have it. That power is the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead (**Rom. 6:4**) and is sufficient to deliver each person from the *compulsion* to sin, to think bitter thoughts, to engage in jealousy, envy, criticism, resentment, coveting, etc. With His power in possession, that person may still rebel if he chooses, but he no longer is compelled to do so; he may thoroughly repent and quickly turn completely to righteous living if he truly wants to and if he remembers to do so. Therefore, we are not to forsake assembling together, but should continue to warn and urge and encourage one another all the more faithfully as the Day of the Lord approaches (**Heb. 10:25**). Each Christian can begin living in Christ's righteousness – if he wishes to do so (**I Jn. 2:1**). Each Christian should do so, for Christ's righteousness is a first thing to be established (**Matt. 6:33**), inasmuch as the fully righteous are barely saved (**I Pet. 4:18**) – and then other needful things can be added.

If in the relatively mild spiritual conflict of this day a Christian continues to be overcome, what will be his position when the hordes of Satan converge upon him? If he continues to be overcome while the river of evil and destruction is fairly well contained between embankments, what will he do when the river overflows its banks in a flood (**Jer. 12:5, Rev. 12:15**)? Feelings of unworthiness and feelings of inadequacy (I just can't) which prevent our accomplishing God's plan are there because of lack of repentance. This preparation is vitally important and it must reach thoroughly and deeply into the heart; mental recognition is just not adequate. The Holy Spirit must be given lengthy opportunity to heal even the deep wounds in our past lives until there is *nothing* remaining that can throw us into a mood, or a withdrawal, or bitterness, or rebellion, causing us to turn off the things of the Lord. This is the only way to a changed life. The Holy Spirit must have full opportunity to enlighten our present so we can constantly be walking with Him. The Holy Spirit must also have full opportunity to direct our future into the way in which we ought to go. Without repentance in depth, there can be no consistency in becoming what the Lord wants us to be. The attainment of Christian maturity is impossible without repentance in depth because first the hindrances need to be removed. Only after thorough repentance and dedication can the end-time outpouring of the Holy Spirit be released to any individual (**Joel 1 and 2**).

Among His jobs, the Holy Spirit is to guide into all truth (**Jn. 16:13**) and to illuminate the recognition of sin and of righteousness (**Jn. 16:8**); therefore, if we are to make ourselves clean, we are to allow the Lord to reason with us (**Isa. 1:18**) that we might depart from unrighteousness (**II Tim. 2:19**) and be *His* servants (**Jn. 8:31-34**). We are to invite Him to search our hearts and bring up any wicked thing (**Psa. 139:23-24**) so that the wicked thing can be purged and blotted out during thorough repentance (a change to walking righteously) and so that a clean heart is created and a steadfast spirit renewed (**Psa. 51:6-10**). Only then can Jesus Christ exercise His full rule and only then can there be that consistent walk in His righteousness (**Deut. 12:8,28**). *After* that, the other things He expects us to use in an effective reflection of Himself here on earth will be added. First the firm foundation for the house (power and ability to support the house) must be in place, then the frame of the house (His righteousness – not ours) can be built upon that foundation. Only then and upon these first things can a worthy house be completed which will provide the peace and comfort of full protection from the “elements” of the Tribulation and its rapidly mounting onslaught of enemy hosts. Only this will enable a triumphant emergence into the very presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

